

CHAPTER 10



Homosexuality among Slave Elites in Ottoman Turkey

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In the Ottoman Empire,¹ as in the mamlūk regimes eventually subdued by and incorporated within it, the ruling elite consisted of “slaves”² (*kullar*, sg. *kul*) who had been born outside Dar al-Islam (i.e., in Dar al-Harb), acquired mostly at ages 10 to 12 (but in some cases ranging from ages 8 to 20), then trained to defend and administer the empire. The *ajemi-oghlan*, foreign-born youths, were early separated from parents, homeland, and the Christian faith. The exclusion of those born Muslim, including the sons of the ruling elite, was consciously designed to prevent the concentration of inherited fortunes and the concomitant feudal growth in power of rich families.

Free of family obligations, carefully selected foreign-born slaves were bound only to the sultan (or vizier or bey) who raised them.³ Originally, boys were captured as spoils of war or purchased. As the empire grew, beginning on a large-scale basis with Sultan Murād II around 1438, a head tax (*devshirme* from the verb *devshir*, “to collect”) was imposed on one in forty boys for the sultan’s military and other uses.⁴ Reports of frequency vary from collection once every five years to annually. It seems likely that the collection became more frequent over time between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Before it lapsed, the *devshirme* was extended from European to Asian provinces during the 16th century. Reports of age vary from as low as eight to as high as twenty, though the basis for the

calculations was one from every forty of those still living who had been baptized fourteen to eighteen years before.⁵ According to V. J. Parry:

The actual road that a recruit might follow would depend, in large degree, on his possession or lack of high intellectual and physical qualities. Of the recruits the best endowed went into the palace schools, there to be instructed in the Muslim faith and in the arts of war, statecraft and administration. After long years of training, and in the prime of their young manhood, the most gifted among them would be sent out as governors (*sanjak-begi*) of provinces. Some of them might rise in the course of time to the rank of governor-general (*beglerbegi*) over a number of sanjaks and then, if fortune favoured them, to the status of vizier, with a seat in the Diwan, that is, the Council of State which controlled the great affairs of the empire. The most exalted office—the grand vizierate—would now be within their reach. Few, however, amongst the recruits chosen for education in the palace schools attained to high eminence. Service in the subordinate offices of the court and of the central administration or in the mounted regiments of the [sultan's] household was the lot which awaited most of these more favoured recruits (Parry 1976:103–4)

They were selected for their “bodily perfection, muscular strength, and intellectual ability, so far as it could be judged without long testing” (Lybyer 1913: 74, relying on Ricaut’s late-seventeenth-century report [1971:11–12, 46]; and on Postel 1560). The very choicest—“all handsome boys, physically perfect, and of marked intellectual promise” (Lybyer 1913:74)—were taken into the palaces of the sultans as *iç oghlanlari* (pages). According to Barnette Miller:

Upon their arrival in Constantinople the tribute children, who had been collected by the palace gatekeepers, were brought before a board of expert examiners presided over by the chief white eunuch in his capacity as director-in-chief of the system of palace education, a procedure that was applied also to purchased slaves and prisoners of war. By a kind of test which in its shrewdness seems curiously to anticipate the modern intelligence test, and by an examination of physical points similar to those applied at a horse, dog, or cattle show, the youths were separated into two classes. The *sine qua non* of the sultan’s service being physical beauty and bodily perfection, the most promising in every respect were set aside for palace service. . . . The remainder, who were distinguished chiefly by reason of their physical strength and dexterity, were assigned to the Janizary corps. The comeliest and cleverest, “those, in whom, besides the accomplishment of the Body, they discover also a noble Genius, fit for a high Education, and such as may render them capable of Serving their Prince, sometime or other,” were designated as student pages (*ich-oghlanlar*). The remainder, who were classified as novices or apprentices (*ajemi-oghlanlar*), were put through a stiff course in manual training. . . . From a group set apart for student pages, the cream

was for a third time skimmed for the Palace School of the Grand Seraglio. (1941: 81–82, quoting Baudier 1624:110)

According to Postel (1560:17), when presented before the sultan, they were clothed in silk and cloth of gold and silver thread.⁶ As the Hapsburg ambassador to Suleiman the Magnificent between the years 1554–62, Ogier Busbecq ([1633] 1968:262) noted, “The Turks rejoice greatly when they find an exceptional man, as though they had acquired a precious object, and they spare no labor or effort in cultivating him.” Lybyer (1913) in the major “Western” recommendation of the system did not consider that criteria such as bodily perfection might have an attraction sexual as well as aesthetic or functional in the Ottoman Empire, where, he was forced to acknowledge, “the vice which takes its name from Sodom was very prevalent among the Ottomans, especially among those in high positions” (p. 74). He also recognized that intellectual ability could not be as readily assessed as bodily perfections, and noticed that the imperial harem was a parallel institution to the school of pages, writing that “the harem might be considered a training-school of slave wives” (p. 79). Nonetheless, Lybyer (1913:71) pressed a view of the Ottoman Empire as entirely meritocratic, even as improving upon Plato’s scheme for *The Republic*. It is not surprising, however, that a Harvard scholar of the Progressive Era was likely to stress meritocracy and not wish to think about homosexual nepotism in a system he was invidiously comparing to the corruption rife in the United States.⁷

Drake (1966), Miller (1941:78–79), and Hidden (1916) all stressed that parents groomed their sons for sexual service to the rulers and, when successful, sold them. According to Richard Davey, the Muslim Georgians and especially the Muslim Kurds sent male slaves despite the religious ban on enslaving Muslims (1897:247n), and according to Miller, “The Georgians and Circassians, whose physical types were especially admired by the Turks, found the slave trade with Constantinople so profitable that they maintained slave farms to meet the demand. They not only regularly captured children for the purpose of selling them in the Turkish slave markets, but even reared their own children with this end in view” (1941:78).

Upon the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia and mass conversion to Islam in 1463, the Bosnians “requested that their children should nevertheless be eligible for the *devshirme*” (Ménage 1960:211). Most of the Bosnian slave boys (called *Potur oghullari*, defined as “boys who are circumcized but not Turkish-speaking”) appear to have gone into Palace service, rather than through military training.

Although, in addition to conscription and purchase, many thousands of youths (Christian and Muslim) were stolen each year, slaveries do not necessarily depend on "naked violence" (to borrow a term from Patterson 1982:309, who underestimates the importance of parental consent, indeed of their initiatives, in supplying mamlûks, janissaries, and eunuchs).

FROM BEAUTY TO SEXUALITY

Because a sultan could not enjoy "association on terms of intimate friendship with those who are high officials of state," he was "practically forced by combination of principles and circumstances to spend his leisure hours with boys, eunuchs and women" (Lybyer 1913: 122). Moreover,

The visible court and retinue of the monarch was wholly ungraced by the presence of the fair sex; all great ceremonies and cavalcades were participated in by men alone. . . . Before the middle of the reign of Suleiman [Sülaymân Khân, "the Magnificent," who ruled 1520–66], no woman resided in the entire vast palace where the sultan spent most of his time. (1913:121)

The fact that the boys, organized in groups of ten, "were watched carefully by eunuchs, both day and night" (Lybyer 1913:33) "to see or overhear if there be any wanton or lewd behavior or discourse amongst them" (Ricaud 1971:27)—another parallel to the harem—indicates that homosexuality among *iç oghlans* was a concern, whether to promote/ensure bureaucratic rationality as Greenberg contends or to secure a monopoly for the master (whether he was the sultan or one of his pashas (1988:439). According to the early European observer Paul Ricaud, pages "studied Persian Novellaries [that] endues them with a kind of Platonick love to each other." Since "the restraint and strictures of Discipline makes them strangers to women; for want of converse with them, they burn in lust one towards another." They were also desired by others:

This passion is not only among the young men to each other, but persons of eminent degree in the seraglio become involved, watching out for their favourites, courting them with presents and services. . . . They call it a passion very laudable and virtuous, and a step to that perfect love of God, whereof mankind is only capable, proceeding by way of love and admiration of his image estamped on the [young, male] creature. This is the colour of virtue they paint over the deformity of their depraved inclinations; but in reality, this love of theirs is nothing but libidinous flames each to other, with which they burn so violently, that banishment and death have not been exam-

ples sufficient to deter them from demonstrations of such like addresses [to the sultan's pages] (Ricaut 1676:33).

TWO STATUS HIERARCHIES AND ATTENUATED BUREAUCRATIC IMPERSONALITY

Greenberg and Bystryń plausibly argue that "a juvenile male can be dominated by older men in a patriarchal society without incurring a stigma because the subordination of the young is a 'natural' (and, for any individual, temporary) feature of a patriarchal social structure" (1982:518). To have so served a sultan might not be stigmatizing in itself. However, it is a past that a high-placed Ottoman official was not eager to publicize, because it too easily armed the already resentful and subordinated faithful with taunts (similar to those which reminded Julius Caesar of his youth under the royal weight of Nicomedes of Bythia).⁸ Being sodomized might have improved one's position within the Ottoman hierarchy, but not one's prestige among the faithful. Precisely because they lacked the honor of those born to Islam, they could be in intimate service (sexual and other kinds) to a sultan (see Patterson 1982:310–11). Generally, they were paid salaries rather than granted land, another attempt to keep them from becoming potentially independent feudal powers like the *sipahis* (Parry 1976:104).⁹

There are many reports that sodomy was rife in the Ottoman Empire,¹⁰ but none I have encountered suggests that being inseminated increased one's masculinity as it did until recently in Melanesian militaristic societies.¹¹ Youthful homosexual receptivity did not bar one from the responsibilities and fruits of high office. Thus, while the services of Rüstem, a Croatian-born page, to Süleyman Khan were exclusively sexual, his predecessor, Ibrahim, was raised to the office of *sadr-i azam* (grand vizier) in quite unbureaucratic fashion, enjoyed favor, power, and, apparently, also Süleyman, for decades beyond his adolescent blossom.¹² "Favorite boys grew up to marry their masters' daughters, to take over management of businesses, properties, etc. The Sultan's favorite boys often grew up to be generals, governors, and high court officials" (Drake 1966:19)—and also themselves major slave-owners (Papoulia 1963:7). At the time of his death Rüstem, for instance, owned seventeen hundred slaves (Babinger 1978:87).¹³

Despite the amassing of riches by some slaves, in the Turkish stratification of honor, even the richest and most powerful slave was "socially dead." For instance, Ibrahim, "the second most powerful man in the most powerful empire of the time" could not testify in a trial (Patterson 1982:313, following Repp 1968:138–39). Especially in patriarchal cultures, genealogical isolates,

whose status neither derives from nor can be transmitted through familial lines, rank lower than the poorest freeborn man.

The janissaries—the usual Western designation for the Ottoman army, derived from *yenīcherī*¹⁴ which meant “new troops,” (also known as Sipahis of the Porte)—were the sultan’s infidel-born six mounted regiments, about fifty thousand men, constituting about a quarter of the army. Like court officials, the janissaries enjoyed more tangible consolations beyond the realm of honor—in which they were all equally nonentities.¹⁵

Equality in lack of honor/status is not sufficient reason to consider the Ottoman slave elite a rational bureaucracy. I agree with Greenberg that “advancement was generally based on seniority and merit rather than birth,” and that this is a significant step away from “feudalism” (1988:439). Nonetheless, I do not believe that the advancement of a sultan’s (past or present) sexual favorite posed no “organizational problem.” Nepotism is not the only kind of departure from universalism, common though it has been across space and time. Precisely *within the state structure*, homosexual favoritism could stimulate resentment among those passed over. That, “with the exception of state functionaries, the Turkish population was not bureaucratized and not trained for future employment in the bureaucracy,” as Greenberg argues, is true, but irrelevant (1988:439; see Mumcu 1963:71). It was precisely within the realm of the exception—“in the state structure” among “state functionaries,” to use Greenberg’s locutions—that there was a bureaucratic/patrimonial tension, not just in the training academies.

Once one discounts the typical European rhetoric about “infamy,” Eton’s surmise seems plausible: chastity was imposed on early “janizaries,” but, over time, and with their greater power (and weaker sultans), “the corps itself was bastardized and rendered contemptible by the introduction of the vilest of the people; men occupied in the lowest employments, and even tainted with the most infamous crimes, who would have been formerly expelled from the service with the greatest indignation” ([1798] 1973:29). The difficulty in extirpating same-sex sexual relations from Islamic military academies was evidenced in the assassination in 1941 of General Shahab after he had attempted to accomplish such a feat in the Persian academy (Suratgar 1951: 54). The difficulty was greatest within military-training academies, but existed throughout the Ottoman system of government among officials far away from their families (often enough, from any wives and children, as well as from parents and siblings).

Francis Osborne was one northern savant and comparativist historian who recognized distinct advantages in deploying over vast spaces an army of unmarried men, noting that for the janissaries, “quite unshackled from the

magnetical force of an affection to wife and children, by use made natural (which chains Christians like fond Apes to their own doors) every place is fancied their proper sphere. . . . Neither doth the want of Wives raise such cries are made by the Relicts and Children of slain souldiers" (1656:253).¹⁶

That is, not only could they be dispatched anywhere, but there was no one to mourn them after they were slain, or to press their commanders not to put them in harm's way.

THE INITIAL SUCCESS BUT GRADUAL EROSION OF ONE-GENERATIONAL ELITE SYSTEMS

By short-circuiting the succession of generations and the accumulation of riches, prerogatives, and honors by powerful slaves (or former slaves), the Ottoman system effectively blocked transgenerational accumulation of official positions (and of the riches accumulated by those occupying those positions). The Ottoman system of taking youths from the peripheries of the empire was more effective in keeping its administrators from enriching their natal families than was the Chinese bureaucratic system, in which officials were dispatched (at the start of their careers at least) far from their place of origin, but eventually tended to return to the capital. Employing eunuchs in high office, as both Chinese emperors and Ottoman sultans did (see Ayalon 1979), totally blocked the enrichment of descendants. But unless considerable distance was put between the eunuch and his natal family, eunuchs promoted family interests.¹⁷ Even more in the case of foreign-born eunuchs than in that of foreign-born but reproductively intact "slaves," the native population could invidiously compare its honor to the lack of honor of the un-men. Along with their monopoly on honor, as Parry notes, "to the Muslim-born subjects of the sultan was reserved exclusive control of the Muslim religious, legal and educational institutions of the empire" (1976:103).

For a time, the system of staffing administration and army with aliens was successful in preventing hereditary power from accumulating outside the control of the sultanate (especially insofar as they did not marry and/or procreate). Dersivh/Baktashi asceticism as well as pederastic preferences may have been involved in this demographic phenomenon. However, as among the mamlūks, the one-generation elite system did not prevent collective action against the sultans on behalf of group interests. The *yenīcherī* intrigued, meddled in successions, refused to go too far afield (thus saving Persia and Vienna from conquest), rioted, and increasingly extorted sultans in the same way the mamlūks had and continued to do, especially in the revolt of 1703 (Lybyer 1913: 91–97; Barber 1973:125–35). Moreover, as Hourani observes,

"in spite of the attempt by the sultan to keep his professional army apart from the local population, in course of time they began to mingle. By the end of the seventeenth century janissaries were pursuing crafts and trades, and membership of the corps became a kind of property, conferring a right to privileges and pensions, which could be handed to sons, or be bought by members of the civil population" (Hourani 1991:237).

This process proceeded at different rates and to different extents in different provinces, with Tunis already particularly notable for both in the late sixteenth century in contrast to Algiers where control from Constantinople remained more effective (Hourani 1991:229–30). Although I have absolutely no evidence for it, I would hypothesize that over time the masculinity of those conscripted in the Ottoman *devshirme* declined in importance and that the ratio of soldiers to "sextoys" among the Christian boys decreased.¹⁸ The latter part of this surmise at least would seem to be testable in Turkish archives, although complicated by the variety of attributes sought among those not selected for military service.¹⁹

The Ottoman case probably provides another example of gradual effemination of age-stratified homosexuality (as in Tokugawa Japan). More obviously, it demonstrates the difficulty of building and maintaining a body of functionaries who will rule impersonally. The isolation of mamlūks and *yenīcherī* from their natal families and from the general population in the empires they governed and defended fostered same-sex emotional and sexual relations rather than eliminating any relationships of the foreign-born mamlūk or *yenīcherī* other than with the sultan who owned them. As both the mamlūk and *yenīcherī* cases show, even when elites are genealogically isolated, they can still manage to disrupt bureaucratic rationality (and/or other kinds of authority) by advancing favorites (friends as well as sexual partners) and by acting collectively. That is, the family is not the only impediment to impersonal order. Moreover, the history of increasing loosening of the principle of recruiting the governing elite anew also suggests that a social system without any accumulation of official status (and riches concomitant to high office) is very difficult to maintain. Men find ways to ensure the prosperity of their sons (or, in their absence, sexual favorites), even when and where their own positions cannot be inherited.

Notes

Many years ago, David Greenberg called my attention to both Lybyer (1913) and Creasy (1877), whose florid style I have sampled herein. Ulku Bates and Wayne Dynes have corrected at least some of my mistakes with Turkish words. Wayne Dynes, David Greenberg, and Will Roscoe made helpful comments on earlier drafts.

1. Othman/Osman, for whom the dynasty was named, acceded to the throne of a small state around Söğüt in northwestern Anatolia around 1281 and ruled until about 1326. The dynasty was overthrown by "the young Turks" led by Mustapha Kemal (Atatürk), founder and first president of the Turkish Republic, who abolished the caliphate in 1924. In the long *durée* with its vast expansion in size and slow contraction, the apogee was the reign of Suleiman (Süleyman) the Magnificent between 1520 and 1566. The particular focus of this chapter, the institution of a foreign elite troop without local ties, began devolving almost immediately thereafter with an increasing focus on firearms and the recruitment of Turkish soldiers as *kulkardasi*, "brothers of the *kul*" (Inalcik 1973:48; Parry 1976:122), and also sons of *kul* (Ménage 1966:66). On the preceding flux in the region, see Vryonis (1971). This was a major difference from Egypt and Syria, where during the mamluk era "every Royal Mamlūk, on finishing his early training at military school and becoming a fully trained soldier, legally had the same right to become Sultan as any other Royal Mamlūk. . . . the Ottoman Sultan was a free and hereditary ruler" (Ayalon 1956:99). Since they bordered Europeans who used firearms and had elite units of archers, not just cavalry like the mamlūks, the Ottomans were fairly quick to incorporate firearms, in contrast to the unstinting mamlūk resistance to such degradingly mass weapons.

2. Papoulia argues that graduation from training schools was a sort of manumission, so that thereafter those who served the sultan were clients (*mawla*) rather than slaves (1963:4–10). Ayalon asserts that "the Ottoman slave was never manumitted until his very death," in contrast to mamlūks (1956:99). On their distinctive legal status, see Mumcu (1963). Ménage discusses the status of a sultan's *kul* being greater than that of other subjects (1966:66).

3. The Ottoman sultanate, unlike mamlūk positions, was hereditary within the Osman line. Until 1617, when the principle of primogeniture was established, Christian-born troops and administrators exerted an influence on which son succeeded to the throne (and legally executed his brothers; Busbecq 1968:30; Hammer 1827:98). "The sultan's palace provided a model for the residence of viziers and statesmen in the capital and of governors in the provinces." Indeed the minimum size of their retinues was prescribed (Babinger 1978:87).

4. This is the most widely accepted—but still controversial—dating: see Babinger (1978:6, 85, 438), Cahen (1970), Papoulia (1963), Parry (1976:159). The earliest certain attestation is a 1395 sermon of Isidore Glabas (Vryonis 1956). Vryonis suggests that what is known about the Seljuk slave institution in pre-Ottoman Anatolia indicates "(a) That the Ottoman system was directly inspired by that of the Seljuks of Rum. (b) There is great probability that the levying of Christian children from amongst the subject populations of the Muslim rulers was practiced in Anatolia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries" (1964:150).

5. Ménage (1960) discusses the difficulties of dating the origins or end of the institution, or the ages of those subject to *devshirme*: five is from Zinkeisen (1840–63, 3:216), annual from Lybyer (1913:51). That it was ad hoc rather than on a fixed schedule is a strong possibility. Ménage (1966:77n51) discusses the possibility that *devshirme* first was practiced in Rūmeli (1966:77n51).

6. Ricaut, Lybyer's most trusted source, reported that clothing and diet of *iç-oghlan*s were simple, but there is no contradiction in accepting his reports of quotidian simplicity and Postel's of imperial splendor of dress when taken into the imperial presence (Ricaut [1668] 1971:49).

7. See Hofstadter 1956 on the Progressives. Lybyer's endorsement was reaffirmed by Miller, who, however, noted (based on Angiolello) that Muhammad the Conqueror, the founder of the Palace School (*Enderun*) scandalized his own son (Bayazid II) by commissioning lascivious pictures (1941:42). More elaborate and conventionally moralistic rhetoric about the horrors of Turkish taste is exemplified by Creasy:

They [specifically, Bajazet and his general Ali Pasha in the late 14th century] introduced [*sic*] among the Ottoman grandees (and the loathsome habit soon spread far and wide) the open and notorious practice of those unutterable deeds of vice and crime, which the natural judgment of mankind in every age and every race has branded as the most horrible of all offences against God and man. . . . The pen recoils from this detestable subject; and it is indeed one of the shameful peculiarities of such vice that its very enormity secures to a great extent its oblivion. But it is the stern duty of History not to flinch from the facts, which prove how fearful a curse the Ottoman power was to the lands which it overran during the period of its ascendancy. It became Turkish practice to procure by treaty, by purchase, by force, or by fraud, bands of the fairest children of the conquered Christians, who were placed in the palaces of the Sultan, his viziers, and his pachas, under the title of pages, but too often really to serve as the helpless materials of abomination. (1877:34)

After a quatrain of Milton, Creasy concluded with an unflinching judgment that "pity must be blended with the loathing with which we regard the dishonest splendours of these involuntary apostates; but as unmixed as inexpressible is our abhorrence of the authors of their guilt and shame" (1877:35).

8. They whose ancestors had shed their blood for the father were, in the lands which their fathers had conquered, denied admittance to the class which not only filled most of the offices of army and state but enjoyed high privileges. Sons of the conquered inhabitants, infidel-born, might alone become nobles, paid by the state rather than contributing to its expenses, not subject to the judges trained from boyhood in the Sacred Law; while their own Moslem sons were rigidly excluded from the honored class, were obliged to bear a part in the burdens of state with small hope of sharing its glory, and were expected to take their chances before the same courts to which Christians and Jews were brought for civil and criminal cases. (Lybyer 1913:117)

That the system was working smoothly, defending them, and securing the riches of empire without shedding their own blood in conquering or securing it may well not have occurred to Turks, but Lybyer was using his own standards, not reporting theirs.

9. As Parry notes, "The sultan had at his command a warrior class far more numerous than the armed forces of the imperial household and distinct from them in status [and origin]—the 'feudal' horsemen known as sipahis and located in most, but not all, of the provinces of the empire. These horsemen came to war at the call of the sultan and, in reward for their fulfillment of this obligation, held fiefs adequate to maintain them as efficient soldiers" (1976:104).

10. Lybyer assessed the reliability of various travelers (1913:304–22). See Blount (1636:14), Creasy (1877:34–35, 85–86), Eton (1973 [1798]:29), Inalcik (1973:74–75), Pitts (1731:26). The Genoese Jacopo de Promontorio (ca. 1475) attributed the low birthrate of native Turks (specifically in Anatolia and Rûmelia) to the "infinite lechery of various slaves and young boys to whom they give themselves" (quoted in Babinger 1978:450). Having more than one son was rare, he wrote.

11. Drake concludes that "Turkish evidence suggests that the boys loved most tenderly grew into the most virile men, those used most brutally became effeminate" quoting a "classical" Turkish saying: "Fear makes a boy into a woman, love makes him into a man" (1966:24–25). However, even this perhaps less-than-disinterested claim does not provide any basis for interpreting boy-insemination (in itself) as masculinizing them.

12. Ibrahim progressed from Grand Falconer and Master of the Pages to First Officer of the Royal Bedchamber, governor of a province, Vizier, and Grand Vizier, the highest position in the structure of offices.

They ate their meals together, went boating, and in times of war shared a tent—or even the same bed. . . . When each August the Sultan moved his court (and harem) to the more bracing climate of Adrianople [now Edirne], he and Ibrahim spent days together engaged in falconry. . . . and in their splendid tents each evening Ibrahim was always ready with his music, or at hand if the Sultan felt the urge to write a poem. . . . At times the two men even wore each other's clothes. . . . The Ottoman court was scandalised. To them it was totally unsuitable for the world's greatest emperor to show such favour to a slave. (Barber 1973:36–37, 47)

Ibrahim was strangled in 1536.

13. At least three became Grand Vizier: Rüstem and Ibrahim during Süleyman I's reign and Kara Mustafa during that of Mahomet IV a century later (Barber 1973:103).

14. The Arabic form *yenīshāriyye* was twisted in colloquial usage (in Egypt) to the plural *inkishāriyye* and the singular *inkishārī* (Shaw 1964:91).

15. Two of the six regiments included "men born Muslim, but born outside the confines of the Ottoman empire," hence also lacking local relatives, "the other four regiments being composed of recruits drawn in general from the palace schools" (Parry 1976:104, 158). Although there are claims that *yenicheri* existed earlier, the argument of Ménage (1966:72–76; also see Palmer 1953) that they were "new" some time between 1361 and 1365, early in the reign of Murād I, is compelling.

16. I interpret "made natural" to indicate that Osborne did not believe domesticity is natural for men, but may become habituated. He did not get into the question of what is "natural" sexual conduct for those not "chained to their own doors."

17. The same has been true of "princes" of the Catholic church. Church property was guarded from individual expropriation for the benefit of heirs by forbidding the clergy to marry (i.e., enforcing celibacy with or without chastity), but church officials throughout history have advanced the political and economic interests of their natal families, especially those of their siblings' children.

18. This conjecture is based less on hostile European discourse about janissary degeneracy than on what seems to me a tendency for the beauty of the boys involved in age-stratified homosexuality increasingly to be valued over military attributes as a rising mercantile bourgeoisie shares with the military elite in the cultivation/consumption of pretty boys, for example, in feudal Japan (see Murray 1992).

19. The Palace school produced artists and scholars as well as soldiers and administrators, and craftsmen working for the sultan created some of the finest and most original works of Ottoman civilization. The Palace was the principal creative source in Ottoman culture. The great architect Sinan (1490?–1588), for example, came originally as a *devsirme* boy from Kayseri. . . . Most poets and writers had some connection with the Palace. Bāyezīd II's account books show that about twenty poets regularly benefitted from the sultan's largesse. Historiography received similar encouragement. (Inalcik 1973:88)

Cultivation of the arts is not incompatible with homosexuality, by any means.

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